NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

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International Women's Day

CONNECTING GIRLS, INSPIRING FUTURES

March 8, 2012

bulletin

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Up Front from the President

"Freedom from Fear", could be said to sum up the whole philosophy of human rights.
~ Dag Hammarskjold

I've been out of the closet for some time. I only go back in when the school day begins.
~ Anonymous high school student

Although we are striving to make our schools more inclusive we need to recognize that there are marginalized groups of students in our classrooms. It is incumbent on us to ensure that they are included in all aspects of education. As teachers, we create learning environments that genuinely recognize and embrace every student despite race, class, gender, religion, learning style and sexual orientation. We want our schools and classrooms to be safe, caring spaces that foster healthy growth and development of all students. Unfortunately, for some of our students this is not their reality.

In January I attended a one day session hosted by the Department of Education called *Creating Safe Spaces: Affirming Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth and Adults*. This awareness session focused on the difficulties and statistics of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) youth in our province and the country. As the Minister of Education, the Honourable Clyde Jackman, addressed the audience, he informed everyone that the government had invested approximately $90,000 to establish My Gay-Straight Alliance (MyGSA) resources that would be provided to junior and senior high schools across the province. Included in those resources would be a website – mygsa.ca. At that time the minister requested that all school boards would review the codes of conduct of their schools to ensure they make specific references to protecting and supporting sexual minority students. He was adamant that we make sure our students and staff hear the message that "we will not tolerate harassment or bullying of any kind in our schools".

Many teachers are not comfortable discussing sexuality with their students for a variety of reasons, all of them valid. However, we need to be given professional development in the areas of sexual orientation and sexual identity to be well equipped to deal with students who disclose to their teachers and also for us to be cognizant of students who are the sexual minority and /or have sexual minority siblings, parents/caregivers or other family members or friends.

Many students use phrases and words such as *that's so gay*, *homo*, and *faggot* and this vocabulary has become embedded in youth culture as a putdown equivalent to *stupid* or in reference to a derogatory comment. Most students use this vocabulary without a thought to how it could be affecting their peers. If such comments are tolerated and permitted to be used in schools it will only reinforce the intolerance and negative perceptions of sexual minorities.

As teachers, we can do a number of things within our school environments to help support sexual minority youth. We can inform ourselves about the issues affecting sexual minority youth in the school environment. We can help support the formation of a gay-straight student alliance. We can also provide inclusive sexual health programming in which students can access age-appropriate information about issues impacting their lives. We can use grade-appropriate books and other resources that represent students and families that are sexual minorities, use a variety of multimedia that represent diversity and make reference to famous personalities who have come out to the public as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. There is no ill will on the part of any teacher who is not comfortable or lacks the skills to deal with any aspect of homophobia bullying. Teachers must be provided with the necessary training, professional development

and awareness so they are equipped with the skills to be able to confront homophobia and fully support students with different sexual orientation and identity.

Gender equality is another part of social justice and girls across the world are often discriminated against because of their gender. To bring awareness to such inequalities a movement was established called *Because I am a Girl*, and in December 2011 the United Nations declared October 11th the International Day of the Girl Child. Having such a Day of the Girl Child will focus the world's attention on the importance of girls' rights. It will be an important day to highlight and ensure that girls worldwide get the investment and recognition they deserve as citizens and as agents of change within their own families, communities and nations.

Because I am a Girl is a program that teachers can avail of to support girls in their communities, province and worldwide. The program is free and all that's required is to go online and follow the instructions. All the resources are provided free to teachers who want to be mentors. There are many obstacles and/or opportunities in our lives, such as where we are born, what access to education we have, who we know, how much money we have, etc. All these things have an impact on the kind of life we live, but girls may also face certain challenges and stereotypes just because of their gender. The *Because I am a Girl* program provides the opportunity to become aware of many issues facing girls throughout the world and how certain issues within Canada also affect girls. Girls in the poorest regions of the world are the most disadvantaged as they face many challenges to survival and development simply because they are girls. There is no question that investing in girls in developing countries is key to reducing global poverty, one of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. If girls are healthy, educated and empowered, they will grow up to pull themselves out of poverty and take their children, communities and nations along with them.

On March 8th we celebrate International Women's Day around the world. This is a day that celebrates the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. The first International Women's Day event began in 1911. According to Equal Voice, an organization that advocates for more women in politics: In Canada, 52% of the population is female but only 22% of Members of Parliament are women. Out of 189 countries, Canada ranks 50th for the number of women elected to national parliament. Despite enjoying economic prosperity and political stability, Canada now has fewer women in parliament than most of Europe and many other countries in the world, including Rwanda, Iraq and Afghanistan. Rwanda has the most elected women (53%) of any national parliament in the world.

Polling shows that women care about different issues. The United Nations says that a critical mass of at least 30% is needed before governments produce public policy representing women's concerns and before political institutions begin to change the way they do business. One has to ask why more women are not running for political office in Canada? I am certain there are a variety of reasons. But it is important that we have knowledge of this information and try to enhance involvement so we can make a difference in our provinces, country and to make our voices heard.

Everyone – female and male, sexual minority individuals and other marginalized groups – have a human right to be treated with respect, dignity and tolerance. It is our goal as teachers and citizens of the world to do the best we can to ensure that under our watch everyone is treated fairly and are given the freedom to express themselves openly and without fear of discrimination of any kind.

Lily B.

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PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

STEPHENVILLE

Stephenville High students win big at 2011 WHSCC Student Safety Video/Radio Ad contest

Winners of the 2011 Workplace Health and Safety Compensation Commission (WHSCC) Student Safety Video/Radio Ad contest were recently announced. Stephenville High School came out on top this year taking both the Safety Video and Radio awards. Winners are Sonali Verma (video) and William and Jillian Forsey (radio). Winners receive $500 for the winning Radio and as well as $500 for the winning Video Ad.

The Student Safety Video/Radio Ad contest is part of the Commission's commitment to transforming attitudes and behaviours related to workplace safety for young workers across the province.

Pictured (l-r): Mrs. Odelia Caul, teacher; William Forsey; Jillian Forsey; and Sonali Verma.

ST. JOHN'S

St. Andrew's Wall of Acceptance celebrates differences

The Kindergarten and Grade One students of St. Andrew's Elementary in St. John's, along with their teachers, Mrs. Susan Jackman and Mrs. Jacquie Mills, completed a unit on Difference and Diversity with a focus on homophobia. Using children's literature they began a discussion on how each child is different in their looks, likes and dislikes. The unit was extended to include differences in families, namely single parent, foster parent, heterosexual and same sex families. The children completed many activities based on these issues through the use of children's literature and discussions. It was a topic well received by staff, students and the school community.

"Bullying is becoming an ever-increasing problem in today's society causing many students and adults to become fearful in their everyday lives. It comes from a misunderstanding and lack of acceptance of diversity and difference amongst individuals. It is our hope that by beginning to discuss homophobia with the Kindergarten and Grade One children we are able to properly inform them and help them to grow up with an open mind and love for all people." (S. Jackman & J. Mills, 2011)

Students at St. Andrew's Elementary sit in front of the school's Wall of Acceptance where the students' artwork was displayed for two months.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Getting the "Real Deal" on Breakfast Cereal

March is Dietitians of Canada's Nutrition Month® and this year they are encouraging you to "get the real deal on your meal". So Kids Eat Smart Foundation is supporting this message by helping you get the "real deal" on breakfast, which is widely recognized as the most important meal of the day. Ready-to-eat breakfast cereals can be a healthy meal choice that require little to no preparation. A bowl of cereal is often low in fat and full of vitamins and minerals.

Choosing a healthy breakfast cereal can be difficult with so many products on the market, but when the right choice is made no other breakfast food can offer as much fibre, calcium, iron, and zinc. The only way to tell if a breakfast cereal is healthy is to take the time to read the label. Here are a few criteria for choosing a healthy ready-to-eat breakfast cereal: low in fat; low in sugar; low in sodium; high in fibre; made with whole grains.

The first step is to read the ingredient list. Look for the word "whole grain" as one of the first ingredients, such as whole grain, whole wheat flour or whole oats. As ingredients are listed in descending order by weight, whole grains listed first means that the cereal is made up of mostly whole grains. Although 100% bran cereals may not list whole grains as its first ingredient, they are considered whole grain because they are a concentrated source of bran, which is not present in refined grains.

The next step is to read the nutrition label. Look for a cereal that is high in fibre, as not all whole grains are high in fibre. Choose a high fibre cereal that has at least 4 grams of fibre per serving and no more than 7 grams of sugar. An exception can be cereals with dried fruit because it provides fibre, vitamins, and minerals. When reading the nutrition label, sodium is another important nutrient to consider. Many people are surprised by how much sodium some cereals deliver. Look for a cereal that has no more than 240 milligrams of sodium per serving.

There are also some simple steps that you can take to make your cereal healthier. Using low-fat milk or soy milk will provide protein, calcium, and other important vitamins and minerals. Topping your cereal with fresh or frozen fruit, nuts, seeds, wheat germ, or flax seed will also add extra benefits.

Making healthy choices when grocery shopping and when preparing your meal is important for you and your family. Kids Eat Smart Foundation also

encourages volunteers to follow these steps when choosing a cereal to serve at their Kids Eat Smart Clubs. Getting to know the products you are purchasing is the first step to ensuring a healthy meal and a healthy life. For more information on making healthy breakfast food visit the Coordinator Resources section of the Kids Eat Smart website (www.kidseatsmart.ca) or contact the Kids Eat Smart Registered Dietitian, Jill O'Brien, at 1-877-722-1996.

The Ella Manuel Award 2012

The Ella Manuel Award is being offered in 2012 to assist a young woman from Newfoundland and Labrador to further her education in environmental and social issues. Valued at $2,500.00, the award is in memory of Ella Manuel, Newfoundland writer, broadcaster, feminist, and peace activist.

Applicants expecting to graduate this year from high schools in Newfoundland and Labrador are asked to submit through their school principal a two-page essay (1,000 words maximum) describing how their interests and ambitions relate to environmental and social issues in their communities. This must be accompanied by a letter of recommendation from the principal, including a school phone number in case additional information should be required.

The principal's letter should describe the applicant's academic record and general qualifications, such as leadership capacity and interest in environmental and community issues, and should give an indication of financial need. Copies of the transcripts of marks for Grades 10, 11 and 12 are also required. Only one application from each school will be accepted. Preference may be given to applicants from rural areas.

Completed applications must be received by **April 1, 2012**, and sent to: Professional Development Division, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL, A1B 1W1; Fax: 726-4302 or toll-free 1-877-711-6582; scardoulis@nlta.nl.ca.

The Dr. David Dibbon Leadership Scholar Award

The **Dr. David Dibbon Leadership Scholar Award**, valued at **$10,000** *($5,000 per year for two years)*, has been established by his family, friends, colleagues and students to commemorate the life and work of Dr. David Dibbon, Dean of the Faculty of Education, 2008-2010.

The Scholar Award will be awarded in alternating years to a doctoral student in educational administration who holds Dr. Dibbon's ideals and has been accepted into PhD studies in the Faculty of Education. Five thousand dollars will be awarded in one year when the student begins full-time studies. The second $5,000 will be awarded after successful completion of the oral comprehensive examination.

The recipient will be known as *The Dr. David Dibbon Leadership Scholar* and will be expected to share his or her research findings with practitioners.

The award will be made by the Dean of Graduate Studies on the recommendation of the Dean of Education.

Dr. David Dibbon was committed to research focused on improving schools and school systems in Newfoundland and Labrador and elsewhere. He had great dreams of what public education could be. He was passionate about enabling schools to become better places for students to learn and for teachers to work. He was a transformational leader and change agent committed to collaborative partnerships and teamwork. He had a gift of innovative thinking, a visionary spirit, and the tenacious patience required to successfully lead meaningful educational reform.

To make a donation: https://www3.mun.ca/alumni/giving.p001

For PhD program information: http://www.mun.ca/educ//grad/phd/index.php

Two Locations –
May 7, Corner Brook & May 9, St. John's

12th Annual Provincial

Teacher Recruitment Fair

The Fair will profile job opportunities and related information for students, teachers or others interested in entry into the profession.

Are you looking for a job in education?
Are you an Education graduate?
Substitute teacher?
Or looking for a career change?

Come by to see the displays, talk to prospective employers, and collect information. It's a chance to discover what's available for teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Monday, May 7, 2012
4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Atrium, Arts Building
Sir Wilfred Grenfell College
Corner Brook

The Provincial Teacher Recruitment Fair is organized in partnership with:

- **Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador;**
- **Memorial University of Newfoundland;**
- **Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association;**
- **Newfoundland and Labrador School Districts.**

Wednesday, May 9, 2012
2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Bruneau Centre for Research and Innovation
Memorial University, St. John's

Information booths will be set up by:

- **Department of Education Teacher Certification Division**
- **Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundand**
- **Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association**
- **School Districts**
- **Mamu Tshishkutamashutau/ Innu Education**

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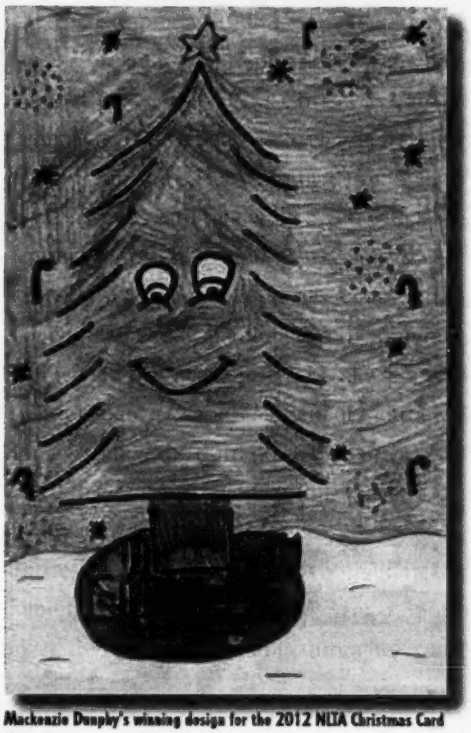
2012 NLTA Christmas Card Contest Winners Announced

Mackenzie Dunphy, a Grade 4 student at Mary Queen of Peace Elementary in St. John's, has been chosen as the winner of the 2012 NLTA Christmas Card Contest. Mackenzie receives a $100 cash award and a framed copy of her winning entry. Her winning design will appear on the NLTA Christmas card that will be sent to schools, businesses and other groups in December 2012. The theme for the 2012 contest was *What Christmas Means to Me*, and the contest was open to all Grade 4 students in the province.

The second place cash prize of $50 was awarded to Jenna-Lee Templeman, a Grade 4 student at Matthew Elementary in Bonavista, and the third place cash prize of $25 was awarded to Grade 4 student Faith Isaacs of Sacred Heart Academy in Marystown.

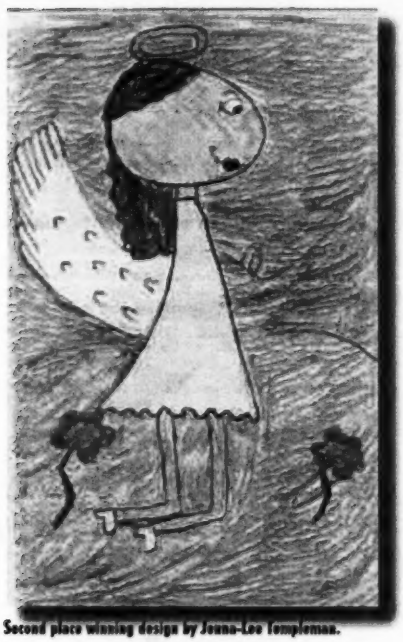
Entries are judged on the basis of their creativity, colour and ability to reproduce well. This year, 1,356 entries were received from Grade 4 students throughout the province.

1



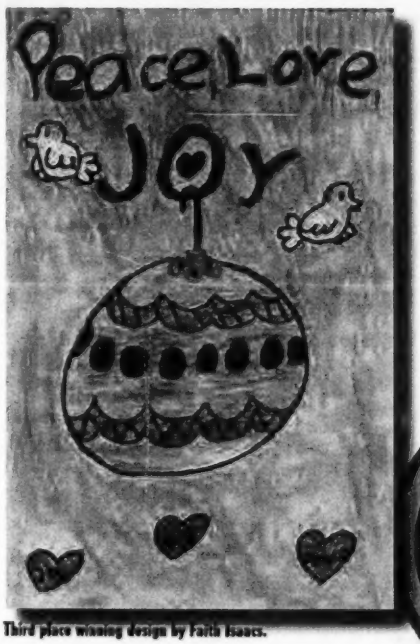
Mackenzie Dunphy's winning design for the 2012 NLTA Christmas Card Contest.

2



Second place winning design by Jenna-Lee Templeman.

3



Third place winning design by Faith Isaacs.

SYLVIA MAY DAWSON, 1955-2011

Gentle woman, quiet light…

These words from a church hymn sung at her funeral could have been written to describe our dear colleague and friend, Sylvia Dawson, who passed away after a courageous battle with cancer on October 13, 2011.

Sylvia was born in Corner Brook on May 6, 1955, the only daughter of Fred and Carrie Martin and loving sister to Leonard and David. She spent many summers in the Town of Cupids where she met and eventually married her husband, Joe Dawson. Sylvia and Joe settled in Bay Roberts where they raised their three beautiful daughters, Carrie, Aimee and Hailey.

Sylvia completed a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Education Degree from Memorial University and began her teaching career in 1974 at St. Michael's School in St. John's where she taught for three years. In 1977 she began teaching at All Hallows Elementary in North River where she remained a Primary Teacher until her retirement in June 2004 at the age of 49 years with 30 years teaching experience to her credit.

Sylvia's quiet but friendly manner endeared her to everyone she met. She was loved and respected by students, parents and colleagues alike. Her dedication to children continued on each year after her retirement as she tutored several children after school and travelled to various schools throughout the province giving presentations on behalf of the School Milk Foundation.

Sylvia worked as a Special Ballot Officer for the Provincial and Federal Elections as well as a representative for the NL Census. She was also an active volunteer in the life of her parish community.

She will be remembered for her warm and gentle ways as well as for the strength and courage she possessed.

Sylvia was a devoted wife, loving mother, respected teacher and trusted friend – this gentle woman's quiet light will shine on in our memories for many years to come.

"Think of her as living in the hearts of those she touched; for nothing loved is ever lost – and she was loved so much."

To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die.
(Submitted by her retired colleagues)

Sylvia May Dawson

In Memoriam
Submission Guidelines

Submissions to In Memoriam should be a **maximum of 250 to 300 words** and may contain a photo of the deceased. In Memoriams should be submitted within a timely manner – normally within the same school year (if possible) of the death of the teacher. Information may be included on where the deceased lived and taught, their education, accomplishments, community involvement and family information.

It is preferred that all submissions be e-mailed to Lesley-Ann Browne, Editor of *The Bulletin*, at labrowne@nlta.nl.ca. If submitting by mail, please address to: Editor, *The Bulletin*, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL, A1B 1W1. Submissions may also be faxed to 726-4302 or toll-free at 1-877-711-6582. Please be sure to include a contact name, school or business name, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address.

NLTA Adopts New Policy on Cyberconduct and Cyberbullying

by STEFANIE TUFF

The use of technology has increased dramatically in recent years, but the standards of professionalism that apply to teachers have not changed. Teaching is a "role model" profession and this reality extends outside the four walls of the classroom. As professionals, teachers are expected to model ethical and appropriate cyberconduct. To guide members in this regard and to communicate and advance the Association's position on the responsibilities of all education stakeholders, the NLTA recently adopted a policy addressing issues related to information and communication technology and electronic communications. Members are encouraged to review the new policy provisions under the heading of "Cyberconduct and Cyberbullying", which can be accessed via the NLTA website by viewing the Policy Manual at www.nlta.nl.ca/files/documents/policy_hndbk.pdf.

It goes without saying that nowadays, information and communication technology (ICT) is a regular part of everyday life for most people. Texting, e-mail, chats, blogs, YouTube, dating websites, Twitter, Facebook, etc., to name just a few examples, have changed the way we communicate and socialize, both personally and professionally. While advances in ICT have, in many ways, made the sharing of information faster and more efficient, the seemingly endless possibilities should not cause us to lose sight of the related concerns and hazards. Teachers need to be well informed and cautious about both their own use of ICT as well as the potential negative impact of inappropriate use of this technology by students.

The NLTA policy on Cyberconduct and Cyberbullying defines ICT as: *Equipment that includes, but is not limited to, any current and emerging stationary or wireless technologies or systems that can be used by individuals or groups for the purpose of communication, entertainment, data management, word processing, internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording and information transmitting/receiving/storing.* The broad range of devices and technology captured by this definition clearly illustrates the wide scope of potential issues and concerns for teachers. While advances in technology have had certain positive effects on teachers' work lives, growing reliance on and expectations regarding the professional use of ICT also raise workload issues. On-line listings of school and district staff e-mail addresses, homework sites, etc. have opened up new lines of communication for the entire school community. In some ways, this has been a positive development. However, teachers must be cautious that expectations not become unreasonable. Ongoing communication at all hours to and from parents, students and district officials is not acceptable and teachers need to set reasonable professional limits in this regard.

"It is crucial to remember that school boards own the computers and Internet connection in schools. School boards can access browsing histories and any electronic communications that have gone through their servers or have been accessed using board equipment."

Also, teachers need to be conscious of the risks inherent in any use of ICT, either at school or at home. It is always important for teachers to remember that off-duty conduct can have employment consequences if it has a negative impact in the professional context. As professionals, teachers are expected to model ethical and appropriate use of ICT. Teachers hold a position of trust with students and can be held accountable, including if their actions expose students to inappropriate material or communications. Texting, e-mail, and creating or participating in blogs, chats, and social networking sites can be risky, especially when personal and intimate information is shared. This is an even greater concern when teachers are using school equipment. It is crucial to

remember that school boards own the computers and Internet connection in schools. School boards can access browsing histories and any electronic communications that have gone through their servers or have been accessed using board equipment.

In light of the above referenced concerns and risks, some general advice and principles that should guide teachers' electronic communications and online conduct are:

- always maintain a professional demeanor in electronic communications with students, parents, colleagues and administrators;
- do not write messages in all CAPITAL letters – this is interpreted as shouting;
- save or keep a printed copy of all work-related e-mail messages;
- avoid engaging in lengthy, detailed e-mail exchanges. This increases workload, and protracted written exchanges are prone to misinterpretation. Respond to complex messages from parents by telephone or in a face-to-face meeting;
- do not use your personal e-mail account or cell phone for work-related contact with students or parents;
- place reasonable professional limits on contact with students and parents outside of regular work hours and exercise extreme caution in using texts, e-mail, or other forms of electronic communication for personal contact with students or parents;
- ensure your privacy settings on social networking/media sites, such as Facebook, are at the highest possible level for all content;
- be extremely cautious of: posting, or allowing others to post, your personal information and images on-line; participating in blogs, chats, social networking and dating sites, etc.;
- students should NOT be your "friends" on Facebook or any other social networking site. Maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times;
- never leave your computer unattended if it is logged into the school district server;
- protect your user name and password from identity theft in order to prevent unauthorized e-mail under your name or access to school documents and other confidential information;
- be aware of and comply with your school and district acceptable use policies;
- never use electronic communications to share confidential information or criticize students, parents, colleagues, administrators or your employer.

Unfortunately, social cruelty among young people is a reality and is growing in the form of cyberbullying. NLTA policy defines cyberbullying (and cybermisconduct) as: *the use of information and communication technology to bully, embarrass, threaten or harass another. It also includes the use of information and communication technology to engage in conduct or behaviour that is derogatory, defamatory, degrading, illegal, and/or abusive.* Teachers are sometimes the targets of cyberbullying. It is important that school boards and teachers take an active role in educating and informing students and parents about acceptable cyberconduct, as well as responding appropriately to incidents of cyberbullying against students and teachers. If a teacher or student is a victim of cybermisconduct/cyberbullying, the following advice should be followed:

- make hard copies of all questionable messages and postings, including the URL, and/or capture and save all posted comments, pictures, videos, texts, etc.;
- immediately demand that the sender stop transmitting or posting the material and state that the conduct is unacceptable and inappropriate; do not further engage the person who is targeting you as this may escalate the situation;
- use block sender technology to prevent continuing communications;
- if a student is the cyberbully, contact the student's parents or request that your school administrator do so;
- if the situation requires immediate action and/or the inappropriate conduct continues, advise and involve your school administrators;
- contact the NLTA if the actions taken to address the situation are ineffective and/or if you need further support or advice.

Some forms of cyberbullying may be considered criminal acts. If there is a question as to whether this is the case, or if you feel your personal safety is at risk, you should contact the police. In such circumstances, it may also be necessary to contact the relevant Internet Service Provider(s) (ISPs) to have the offending material deleted from temporary/permanent sites and archives.

For additional information, the Media Awareness Network (www.media-awareness.ca) offers useful information and resources on safe and appropriate cyberconduct for teachers and students. As well, www.cyberbullying.ca is a great resource for teachers, parents and students. The Canadian Teachers' Federation publication "Cybertips for Teachers" is also available on-line at www.ctf-fce.ca in both French and English.

Stefanie Tuff is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Financing a Year of Deferred Salary Leave

by STEFANIE TUFF

The Deferred Salary Leave Plan (DSLP) is available to any tenured teacher in a permanent position covered by the NLTA Collective Agreement. The terms of reference and other details of the DSLP are set out in Article 51 of the provincial contract (Article 57 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement). Many teachers find the DSLP an excellent means of financing a year of leave to pursue travel, family time, other employment, further studies, or any interest that an individual might have. Leave under the DSLP is fully credited for purposes of pension, seniority, severance pay, salary increments, and sick leave. The plan is registered with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), which does not allow the year of leave to be taken as the last year before retirement. **The deadline to apply for enrolment in the DSLP beginning in September is April 30 of the previous school year.**

While the DSLP provides an excellent opportunity for personal and professional rejuvenation, there are economic realities which must be faced. The Administrative Officers in the Benefits and Economic Services Division are often asked what the "difference is" in take-home pay while participating in the DSLP. We cannot provide specific financial details or advice to members because each individual's situation is different and all financial matters, such as salary levels, income tax rates, CPP and EI contribution rates, etc. are subject to change. Accordingly, the information provided herein contains rough estimates only.

The following comparisons of net salary for a teacher on full salary versus the various DSLP options are rough calculations for illustrative purposes only. Each individual teacher's situation will be different. The estimates are based on the salaries as of September 2011 as the current collective agreements for teachers expire at the end of August 2012 and the amount of any future salary increases are not known at this time. Taxes deducted vary for each teacher and they are approximations only, based on information provided by Teacher Payroll. EI and CPP deductions are based on 2012 formulae. All estimated figures are rounded to the nearest dollar. Teachers participating in the DSLP continue to pay pension premiums based on the full, unreduced salary. EI premiums are paid on the full salary, but are not paid during the year of leave. Therefore, teachers may not be eligible for EI benefits in the year following the year of deferred salary leave, which may have implications for those wishing to take maternity leave right after a deferred salary leave.

Any further questions on the Deferred Salary Leave Plan should be directed to an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA at 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599.

Full Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	67,001	77,604	87,792
Estimated Tax	12,963	16,257	19,478
Estimated EI	840	840	840
Estimated CPP	2,307	2,307	2,307
NLTA Fees	838	970	1,097
Pension Deduction	6,265	7,256	8,209
Estimated Net*	43,788	49,974	55,861

** Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and other deductions.*

2/3 Deferred Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	44,667	51,736	58,528
Estimated Tax	5,762	7,410	9,402
Estimated EI	840	840	840
Estimated CPP	2,038	2,307	2,307
NLTA Fees	558	647	732
Pension Deduction	6,265	7,256	8,209
Estimated Net*	**29,204**	**33,276**	**37,038**

** Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and other deductions.*

3/4 Deferred Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	50,251	58,203	65,844
Estimated Tax	7,258	9,626	11,886
Estimated EI	840	840	840
Estimated CPP	2,307	2,307	2,307
NLTA Fees	628	728	823
Pension Deduction	6,265	7,256	8,209
Estimated Net*	**32,953**	**37,446**	**41,779**

** Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and other deductions.*

4/5 Deferred Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	53,601	62,083	70,234
Estimated Tax	8,397	10,936	13,384
Estimated EI	840	840	840
Estimated CPP	2,307	2,307	2,307
NLTA Fees	670	776	878
Pension Deduction	6,265	7,256	8,209
Estimated Net*	**35,122**	**39,968**	**44,616**

** Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and other deductions.*

Stefanie Tuff is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Are You Thinking About Retiring?

Information You Need to Know

Under the Teachers' Pension Act, a teacher is eligible for pension benefit:

(a) At age 60, with between five and 24 years of pensionable service.

(b) At age 55 or after, with at least 25 years of pensionable service.

(c) After completing thirty years of worked service*, regardless of age.

(d) Reduced pension with 29 years of worked service and at least thirty years of pensionable service. Pension will be reduced based on the number of months a teacher will be retired prior to reaching age 55.

*(*worked service refers to all pensionable service, except university study buy-back that was purchased prior to 1991.)*

Access to Pension Estimator

Teachers also have access to a pension estimator through the main page of the NLTA website (www.nlta.nl.ca); click on "Publications" and go to "P". Teachers can now go on-line and using their individual Teacher Benefit Statement that they receive from the Pensions Division, input their salary information and obtain an estimate of their expected pension at a chosen point of retirement. As well, there is a website dedicated to the Teachers' Pension Plan under the government site at www.fin.gov.nl.ca/fin/government_employee_benefits/pensions/plans_TPP.html.

Checklist for Retiring Teachers

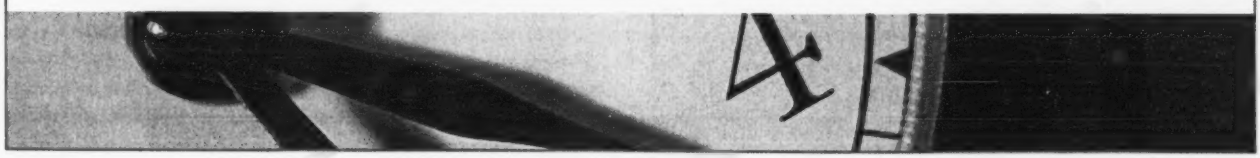
The following checklist is designed to assist teachers as they participate and plan for this upcoming life phase change.

- ☐ Apply to the NLTA to attend a pre-retirement seminar up to two years prior to your year of retirement;
- ☐ Confirm the eligible date of your retirement with the Pensions Division at the pre-retirement seminar or by contacting Pensions Division.
- ☐ Submit your resignation to School Board (**do not** resign until eligibility has been confirmed): one month notice is required if retirement is to occur anytime prior to Christmas; three months notice (March 31st) is required if retirement is to occur after Christmas.
- ☐ Apply for pension by completing the appropriate "Teachers' Pension" application.
- ☐ Complete and submit the Direct Deposit Form to Pensions Division.
- ☐ Apply for severance pay by completing the "Severance Payment Request" form.
- ☐ Confirm/consult with Johnson Inc. on Group Insurance coverage: 1-800-563-1528.
- ☐ Consider joining the Retired Teachers' Association by completing the application form and submitting it to the Pensions Division.
- ☐ Consider seeking personal financial advice regarding financial decisions related to retirement.
- ☐ Keep your mind active and your body healthy. Enjoy life!

Changes Effective Upon Retirement

- NLTA Membership status changes from Active Membership to Life or Associate Membership.
- Access to the services and benefits of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) terminates.
- Basic Life Insurance coverage reduces to twice annual pension from twice annual salary (provided coverage is maintained and premiums paid); coverage terminates at age 65 and is replaced by a members only $15,000 benefit after age 65.
- Basic Critical Illness Insurance terminates.
- Eligibility for EI ceases (unless a person becomes a "re-established worker" or is on a forced medical retirement).

Any questions or comments can be directed to Perry Downey, Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA at pdowney@nlta.nl.ca, Tel: 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 226.



NL Administrators Named Canada's Outstanding Principals for 2012

Congratulations are extended to David Hamlyn, principal of Leo Burke Academy in Bishop's Falls and Christina Pike, principal of St. Paul's Junior High in St. John's on being chosen as recipients of this year's Canada's Outstanding Principals for 2012.

The Canada's Outstanding Principals (COP) program, which was developed by The Learning Partnership, is now in its 8th year. The award is an initiative of The Learning Partnership, and is presented to principals who have made a measurable difference in the lives of their students and their local communities.

Principals are nominated by their peers, school staff and community members in an extensive nomination and selection process. This year's winners will join an illustrious group of over 219 principals who have already been honoured as Canada's Outstanding Principals.

Veronica Lacey, President and CEO of The Learning Partnership, said: "We are proud to celebrate the achievements of these extraordinary principals. Their dedication to enhancing our public education system clearly demonstrates the importance of strong leadership in education."

David and Christina will receive their awards at a Gala Awards Ceremony at the Sheraton Center in Toronto on February 28, 2012. In addition, they have been invited to participate in an exclusive five-day management course at the prestigious Joseph L. Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, where they will have the opportunity to talk and share ideas on leadership issues with other leaders from the educational, social, cultural and business communities.

David Hamlyn

Christina Pike

HATS OFF!

Have you recently won an award or know of a teacher who has been recognized for their contribution to the education of children in Newfoundland and Labrador? If so, we'd like to hear from you.

Please send information on the award as well as a profile of the award winner(s) to:

Lesley-Ann Browne
Editor, *The Bulletin*
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL A1B 1W1
Fax: 709-726--4302 or 1-877-711-6582 (toll free)
E-mail: labrowne@nlta.nl.ca

Boundaries

by CLAUDETTE E. S. COOMBS

Whether it is the fence separating a garden from the neighbour's or the marriage vow given before God or the justice, we face boundaries daily. At each encounter, we choose to respect or disregard that boundary.

Sometimes we resist, or even breach, boundaries without giving due attention to their purpose or the consequences. Sure, we know that fences mark property delineation; locked doors provide security; and, professional licencing, rules and regulations all define ownership and responsibility. The exact nature and implications of any boundary are specific to the context and carry a unique set of rules and expectations. For example, in a social context, relationships have boundaries which respect space, behaviour, language and a mutual understanding of the purpose of the relationship.

As colleagues, business partners, spouses and parents, we have a general understanding of how we are expected to interact with each other. Sometimes this expectation is clearly defined, while other times it may appear somewhat vague. Yet in any of these relationships there is an underlying expectation of trust and respect.

However, the relationship boundaries between teacher and student, teacher and colleague, and teacher and employer are clear. Our Code of Ethics defines teachers' treatment of each other; our employment contract defines our relationship with our employer; and, there are numerous legal documents which define our relationship with our students. Despite these written and implied expectations, the EAP and NLTA staff routinely face situations where boundaries are breached and negative consequences ensue.

The Breach

Our common goal is to eliminate or minimize the occurrence of such breaches and reduce their harmful consequences. One step in this process is education. It is important for teachers to recognize potentially inappropriate behaviour and to choose to avoid it. It would be logical to assume that when teachers have the knowledge, they will respond correctly. Unfortunately, logic does not always rule!

Breaches can occur due to: unclear expectations; lack of experience; absence of specific policy; and misunderstood boundaries. These may be interpreted as unintentional breaches. Alas! There are also very deliberate breaches. Although not always acknowledged as such, these can be the result of flawed beliefs. There are many beliefs which lead to a personal dismissal of the potential consequences. However, perhaps the number one excuse is that "the boundary does not apply to me because …"

Common Breaches

Well, what does happen if the boundary is breached? We look at a breach as an invasion of space; with that space being physical, virtual, emotional, personal, legal or some other infringement on another's right.

The consequences can be very personal and somewhat private or they can be quite open and severe. Moral guilt, marriage termination, social ostracism, professional reprimands, job loss, and legal charges and convictions, all have resulted from teachers' inappropriate breaches of boundaries.

Although – *at the time it seemed like a good idea* – the aftermath can be devastating in its destruction of lives and careers. Like the impaired driver standing in front of the judge, a lapse of judgement and inappropriate action can seriously impact a person's future.

There are some recurring situations which cause complications but may be possible to repair. These include inappropriate, aggressive or manipulative interactions with a colleague or student. Depending on the severity of the breach, and with genuine efforts to remediate the behaviour and compensate for harm, a teacher may be able to continue in their teaching career. However, language or behaviour of a criminally aggressive or sexual nature may limit occupational options.

It should also be recognized that these interactions may be actual physical, in-person contact or they may occur through Internet, email, social networking or cell phone contact.

Whether it is an inappropriate relationship, sexual overtures with a colleague, accessing inappropriate Internet sites or using a position of authority to

manipulate behaviour of colleagues or students, this behaviour will result in unpleasant consequences.

The Lure of Technology

Technology has a constant presence in our daily routines and interactions with others, making it something we take for granted and tend to use with limited awareness of the pitfalls. Although designed as tools for efficiency of access and speed, technological gadgets have become an expected component of our interactions with the world around us. All too often these gadgets are treated as toys, causing us to overlook the responsibilities of their use. The marketing of these tools for their entertainment value, assuages the potential gravity of their use.

We use: iPods while exercising; webinars for education; iPads for browsing; texting for locating shopping companions; and, Facebook for socializing. We have become a digital world of virtual contact. Too often we lose sight of the destination by focussing on the distractions of the journey! Equally often, we do not foresee, nor attend to, the hazards along the way.

Computers and mega-servers can orchestrate the copying, storage and distribution of data, much as the brain does. Unlike the brain's internal judgement and privacy controls, a computer's data can be easily accessed by others who know the code. The problem with our written word, is that once it is typed, it is no longer ours!

Message managers, on-line banking, GPS devices, cruise control and digital cameras have lulled us into a sense of normalcy and security in the ready use of technology and the collection of disposable data. Frequent use of the delete button programs us to believe that things can be discarded and forgotten. If we want one good photo, we are content to take forty and eventually discard thirty-nine. However, forensic science shows us that electronically deleted items generally leave behind a shadow and a trail! Public media shows us that hidden data can be easily retrieved and can go viral.

Knowing this, it is crucial that we guard our personal and professional lives to protect our privacy and our reputation. Social media posts and public, online sites pose many hazards and threats for teachers. If you stick to a guideline that you refrain from saying or writing anything that you would not want the world to see, you can reasonably expect to be free of the misuse of your information. If you choose to not engage in any relationship that you would not want your employer to know about, you are definitely leaning in the safer direction.

If there is an inappropriate relationship between two colleagues, it may cause fallout that will affect professional relationships as well as family trust and security. If there is an inappropriate relationship between a teacher and student, it violates professional standards, incites legal interventions and interferes with healthy adolescent development, causing significant trauma for all involved.

In judging the familiarity of relationships with students, ask these questions:

- Can this relationship be misinterpreted by an objective observer?
- Could the student believe or feel that this is more than professional responsibility?
- Would I want this for my own child?
- Would this make a parent uncomfortable?
- Am I hiding any part of this relationship?

Whether we want to accept it or not, teaching is a profession which influences the development of beliefs, values and behaviours, and teachers are the role models. As appropriate stewards of our charge, we must assess our attitudes, language and behaviours to decide: Am I the model that I want others to follow?

Claudette Coombs is a coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for Teachers. For confidential assistance contact Claudette Coombs (ext. 242) or Judy Beranger (ext. 265).

Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Educators

This is a call-out to:
Teachers
Interpreters
Students
Youth leaders
Government and non-government educators
Anyone who teaches formally or informally about the natural world.

3rd Annual Workshop: Hope and the Environment!

Come join us to share ideas, resources and knowledge with fellow environmental educators.
When: March 29-31, 2012
Where: Pinetree Lodge and Cabins, Traytown NL

With Special Guest : Dr. Elin Kelsey !
Award-winning author, academic and consultant as well as a leading spokesperson for hope, resilience and the environment.
Check out her website at : http://elinkelseyandcompany.com/

Contact Alannah for more info: nlee.workshop@gmail.com or 709-637-7300 ext. 5

"Supporting Environmental Education Across the Province"

IWBs – Interactive White Boards

Coming Soon to a Classroom Near You

by JIM MURPHY

Having lived through the introduction of many technologies in the classroom over the years, none, it would seem, is becoming more ubiquitous in our system than the introduction of Interactive White Boards, or IWBs. But, like the introduction of the PC/Mac into the education system many decades ago, it is important to question both their purpose in the classroom and their subsequent impact on learning. Will they actually improve achievement levels or will they simply make curriculum and the classroom more engaging? Both, we hope! But will teachers embrace them en masse in meaningful ways so that new pedagogies emerge, or will IWBs simply become little more than digital VCRs, flashing 12:00 included? This will undoubtedly depend to a large extent on our ability to better understand how to integrate them as high-end learning tools; an understanding typically garnered through professional learning, mentoring and practice.

"Many schools have already developed expertise in IWBs. It is how this expertise can be shared that will help determine how classrooms of tomorrow will look and feel."

As you know, professional learning can take many forms: reading, research, attending sessions, conferences, coaching/mentoring, and the list can stretch to the end of this page. However, I believe that if we want to move towards the goal of the seamless integration of IWBs into teaching and learning, then effective professional learning must be in the form of continual, job-embedded opportunities in order to operationalize the concepts and shift the pedagogies. Yes, the Department of Education has a responsibility to provide opportunity and support, as do school districts, but school leaders and educators must endeavor to be the managers of change by finding ways to embed training. Many schools have already developed expertise in IWBs. It is how this expertise can be shared that will help determine how classrooms of tomorrow will look and feel.

Through better mentoring and coaching, schools and their neighbors, virtual or geographical, need to find ways to share in house expertise. A simple approach can be "I DO, WE DO, YOU DO". Those comfortable with the use of IWBs need to demonstrate to others how they can enhance the classroom experience. (I DO!) This can mean observing a lesson from a more seasoned IWB user who can demonstrate best practices. This can happen in class, during some preplanned PLC time, or during a PL Day. Next, the educator needs to co-develop a lesson and co-deliver it with the coach providing the supports. (WE DO!) DuFour calls this "learning by doing". This can happen as many times as necessary and a discussion should ensue where the two discuss the outcomes and challenges of the lesson. They may need to go back and "rejig" the lesson until they are both comfortable. Finally, the educator needs to release the training wheels and plan and deliver his or her own lesson, seamlessly integrating the technology into an engaging and interesting class. (YOU DO!) The key here is to accept ownership for the development and delivery of a quality lesson using the IWB as an engaging learning support. Remember the blinking VCR? Well, it is important to expand beyond the flashing 12:00 mentality that sometimes stymies our progress and take the board by the horns!

According to Gladwell in *Outliers*, it takes 10,000 hours to become an expert at something. The 10,000 hour theory can apply as much to us professionally as personally. The more opportunities there are to practice, to learn from others, to explore and most impor-

tantly, to put into practice, the better the comfort level with the integration of the IWBs into the classroom context, and the more comfortable you will become with shifting practice to embed the technology.

Lastly, our "touched generation" needs to interact with these IWBs, particularly the primary and elementary students who are growing up with touch technologies. They expect and anticipate they will be able to interact with the IWBs, so be sure to include them when you plan and deliver your lessons. So, if you should be the recipient of an Interactive White Board in your teaching and learning space in the coming months, then be sure to participate in all professional learning opportunities. But don't forget to confer with instructional leaders and organize time with onsite or virtual mentors who can help you along the path to shifting your practice to include teaching and learning through the integration of technologies in new and meaningful ways. Oh, and one last word, students have no hesitation when it comes to technology. When in doubt, ask a student. Chances are they can click or slide their way to a solution to your problem!!

Jim Murphy is Coordinator of the Virtual Teacher Centre.

Resources

- Gladwell, Malcolm – *Outliers: The Story of Success*, Little, Brown and Company, 2008
- www.nsdc.org – *Three Steps Lead to Differentiation*, JSD, April 2010, Vol. 31, No. 2

Here are a couple of IWB resources to get you started. Of course, Google is your friend.

- www.topmarks.co.uk/Interactive.aspx
- www.teacherled.com/all-interactive-whiteboard-resources/
- www.globalclassroom.org/ecell00/javamath.html
- http://pbskids.org/whiteboard/
- http://teacher.scholastic.com/whiteboards/languagearts.htm

Education for the Environment: Finding the Hope

by ALANNAH HUNT

What's the Problem?

It can be hard to be joyful in the work of educating for environmental change and the task can seem overwhelming. In his book, *Plan B 2.0 Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble,* Lester Brown discusses global environmental issues with the goal being to build a convincing case for the proposal of a new economy. Brown addresses the state of our resources as such:

"We are consuming renewable resources faster than they can regenerate. Forests are shrinking, grasslands are deteriorating, water tables are falling, fisheries are collapsing, and soils are eroding. We are using up oil at a pace that leaves little time to plan beyond peak oil. And we are discharging greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere faster than nature can absorb them." (Brown, 2003)

The world's economic path is environmentally unstable; we are degrading the environment at such a rate that multiple ecological systems are being compromised. The Earth is one giant system that can be compared to a machine such that if one part is broken, the entire machine suffers and does not work to its full potential. As is seen throughout history, sustainable economic growth depends on environmental health, and without a stable environment industries will suffer, economies will decline and societies will collapse. Resolving the global environmental crisis will require the change and creative effort of today's generations. Environmental education through school curriculum and independent environmental education programs can create the foundation for environmentally conscious individuals who will choose an environmentally responsible lifestyle.

Education as a Remedy

Since 1972, when the United Nations conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm, there has been strong support for the development of environmental education as one of the most crucial elements of an "all-out attack" on the world's environmental crisis (Cutter, 2002). Amy Cutter, a member of the Faculty of Education and Creative Arts at Queensland University, believes that education is the most effective means that society possesses for confronting the challenges of the future. She believes that education will shape the world for tomorrow and will be the driving force behind the search for sustainable methods of development and living (Cutter, 2002). Like Cutter (2002), David Orr (1996), the author of the article *Educating for the Environment,* believes that educating the next generation for the future should equip individuals with the skills needed to solve the impending environmental crisis. Young people must learn that there are limits drawn by the ecosystems and they must learn to live within those limits. They must learn how to use energy and materials in an efficient way; they must be able to rebuild economies in order to eliminate waste and pollution and they must be able to manage renewable resources for the long run (Orr, 1996). How will the new generations be able to solve all of

> "Global dread, eco-anxiety, environmental grief – despair about the future of the planet has garnered many labels in recent years. In our noble zeal to educate kids about very real and urgent environmental problems, I'm afraid we have inadvertently created a generation that feels hopeless about the future of the planet. So how do we reach them, without depressing them? How do we get across ideas without giving them nightmares, or sugar-coating it all so that it's just happy talk with no connection to our true, sorry state of degradation? How do we raise hopeful children when we're feeling hopeless ourselves?... I believe we need to create space for kids and adults to talk about how all this gloom and doom makes us feel, while realizing that creating hope represents more than just our feelings... Most of all, we must spread stories that inspire us."
>
> ~ Dr. Elin Kelsey, *Kids Deserve Hope*

Inaugural NLEE Workshop: April 30 – May 2, 2009: "Creating Community: Be a part – Make it yours!"

these problems? The answer starts with education, both formal and informal. If someone is educated to understand their connection with the environment, their ethics and values will reflect this education and enable them to make environmentally ethical choices in relation to their everyday decisions and actions.

Coming Together as a Force for Nature

Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Educators (NLEE), established in 2009, is a growing network of people who have a passion for teaching about environmental issues. The idea for the creation of NLEE came after environmental educators from across Canada gathered in Gros Morne National Park to attend the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication (EECOM) national conference in the fall of 2008. The attendees from Newfoundland and Labrador were affected by the overwhelming sense of camaraderie and joint purpose felt at the event. Since its formation, NLEE has held various workshops that are designed to bring teachers, interpreters, youth leaders, students, government and non-government educators together to share and learn new strategies for presenting environmental education material. All educators that are interested in environmental education are welcome to join the growing NLEE network. New members bring new ideas and experiences that can help shape the future of environmental education in the province.

To date, there have been two annual workshops where the members of NLEE gather to share and learn about new and exciting ways to present environmental education material to various age groups and audiences. Each workshop has hosted a keynote speaker from outside the province that brings a fresh perspective to the group. Past keynote speakers include: Tim Grant, publisher of *Green Teacher Magazine* and nationally recognized ambassador for environmental education, and Dr. Allen Warner, Director of Environmental and Sustainability Studies at Acadia University, leader in the field of environmental education and designer of numerous award-winning experiential environmental education programs.

This year, the third annual NLEE workshop will be held from March 29-31 at Pine Tree Lodge and Cabins in Traytown, in Terra Nova National Park. The theme for this year's workshop is *Hope and the Environment* with keynote speaker, Dr. Elin Kelsey. When it comes to the growing environmental crisis, it is sometimes difficult to feel hopeful about the future of our planet. Environmental educators are faced with the task of educating the masses about our environmental situation, while being sure not to leave their audiences feeling a sense of hopelessness. Avoiding the 'doom and gloom' approach is especially important when dealing with children. Dr. Elin Kelsey is an internationally acclaimed award winning author, consultant, academic and a leading spokesperson for hope, resilience and the environment. It is with great honour that she will be speaking at the annual workshop to share her ideas and experiences with the members of NLEE and share her vision of a joyful education.

Further information regarding NLEE can be found at www.nlee.ca. For information regarding the 3rd annual workshop or about possible sub days, please contact Alannah Hunt at nlee.workshop@gmail.com or phone (709) 637-7300 ext. 5. Find NLEE on Facebook.

2nd Annual NLEE Workshop: November 18-20, 2010: Creating Excitement: Sharing your Passion!"

Alannah Hunt is Education and Research Coordinator with Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Education (NLEE).

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Class Size and Student Diversity

Two Sides of the Same Coin

by BERNIE FROESE-GERMAIN, RICHARD RIEL & BOB MCGAHEY

A View From the Classroom

Among Canadian teacher unions, discussions of class size are increasingly being informed by the importance of considering the diversity of student needs within the classroom (often referred to as class composition).

Gordon Thomas, Executive Secretary for the Alberta Teachers' Association, provides this reality check on the relationship between teachers, class size and student diversity:

Let's bring class size and composition within Alberta schools into focus. A high school teacher might begin her day with a class of 37 students. Four of these students have learning disabilities, five have just moved to Alberta for the booming economy, one has serious behaviour issues, three are repeating the course from last year, seven are below grade level, two arrive late to class on a regular basis, and one is not attending class at all due to instability in his home life. This is just the first of several large classes she will teach this day. In the past, there may have been relief in the form of support staff in the classroom, funding for reducing class sizes across the K-12 system or personnel to provide a comprehensive approach to services that meet the diverse learning needs of all students, but these all appear to be vanishing with the instability associated with funding for education in Alberta. (Thomas, 2011)

Thomas goes on to pose a series of questions that will resonate with teachers across the country:

Now, does this learning context of 37 diverse individuals set the stage for a constructive, personalized, and rewarding learning environment for our children? How frequently might positive teacher-student interactions occur? To what extent could a strong sense of belonging and community among students be created in this classroom? How often would innovative pedagogical practices be undertaken by a teacher to transform the learning in such a challenging context?

These questions raise issues that go beyond the demonstrated positive impact that smaller class size has on student achievement, as important as that is, and speak to students' broader learning experiences at school.

What Class Size Research Says About Education Quality and Equity

For teachers, both class size and diversity matter.

Teachers consistently adapt their teaching to address the individual needs of the learners in their classroom. As the classroom becomes larger and more diverse, this task becomes increasingly more onerous.

Class size and composition also have obvious implications for inclusive education – if class composition is the degree of student diversity, broadly conceived, in the classroom, inclusion is the extent to which teachers have – or not – the necessary supports and services to be able to effectively integrate students with special educational needs into their classrooms and schools. Indeed research has demonstrated that "smaller classes may have the greatest positive impact on students with the greatest educational needs." (OISE-UT/CEA, 2010)

An extensive review of the research on class size by U.S. educational researchers Bruce Biddle and David Berliner concluded that:

- When it is planned thoughtfully and funded adequately, long-term exposure to small classes in the early grades generates substantial advantages for students in American schools, and those extra gains are greater the longer students are exposed to those classes;
- Extra gains from small classes in the early grades are larger when class size is reduced to less than 20 students;
- Extra gains from small classes in the early grades are found for various academic topics and for both traditional measures of student achievement and other indicators of student success;
- Extra gains from small classes in the early grades are retained when students are returned to standard-size classrooms, and these gains are still present in the upper grades and the middle and high school years. (excerpt from Canadian Council on Learning, pp. 2-3)

In addition, their research review reinforces

the finding that smaller classes are more equitable because they allow teachers to more effectively address the needs of all the students in their classroom, particularly the needs of the most disadvantaged students.

They report that, "although extra gains from small classes in the early grades appear for all types of students (and seem to apply equally to boys and girls), they are greater for students who have traditionally been educationally disadvantaged; initial results indicate that the greater gains associated with small classes in the early grades for students who have traditionally been educationally disadvantaged are also carried forward into the upper grades and beyond" (as cited in Canadian Council on Learning, pp. 2-3).

Smaller classes can provide teachers with the opportunity to teach the way they aspire to teach. In a major study of Ontario's primary class size reduction initiative implemented from 2004-2008, teachers reported that teaching in small classes has important pedagogical benefits.

While the large literature base on class size reduction includes some contradictory research interpretations, it also includes a number of relatively robust findings. The research confirms that class size reduction does provide the environment in which teachers can teach differently. In smaller classes, they interact with individual students more frequently and use a greater variety of instructional strategies. They can create more opportunities for higher-order co-construction of meaning by students. They also may spend out-of-classroom work time on more creative planning (and less on routine marking), and they may interact more frequently with other teachers and adults in support of classroom teaching. (Bascia, 2010)

Teachers in the study also reported improved student behaviour and engagement with classroom activities in small classes. A classic win-win-win – for students, teachers, and parents.

It's not difficult to deduce how this could disproportionately benefit students with special educational needs, and why it's a high priority issue for teachers and their organizations. To cite one example, the Manitoba Teachers' Society annual member survey conducted in November 2010 found that the biggest concern of Manitoba teachers is class size and class composition.

The Canadian public also supports smaller class sizes. In our public opinion polling conducted by Vector Research & Development, class size reduction ranked as the highest spending priority in seven of the eight surveys conducted from 1995 to 2008, regardless of variations in the spending priorities examined in each respective survey.

Last spring CTF conducted a national teacher survey on the theme of *The Teacher Voice on Teaching and Learning*. As part of the survey teachers were asked what changes they would make to the education system for the benefit of student learning. Their responses touched on a range of issues and, not surprisingly, class size and class composition were clearly identified as priorities. Provision of the necessary supports and services to allow teachers to help students with special educational needs was another high priority.

CTF National Teacher Survey

In order to get a snapshot of what class size and composition look like across the country, CTF recently conducted a national survey of nearly 3,800 teachers representing 9,894 classes in English and French schools. The sample teacher pool was drawn from 12 participating CTF member organizations. These are among the survey findings.

Average class size is 21.3 students, ranging from 22.1 students for grades 4-8 to 19 students for junior

(cont'd. on page 24)

kindergarten or kindergarten (JK-K). English schools (including immersion) have an average class size of nearly 22 students, while French as a first language schools have a slightly smaller average class size of just over 19 students.

Average class size data of course only provides a piece of the overall picture. Our analysis of the distribution of class size by grade level reveals that:

- over a third of the classes for all grade levels combined contained 25 students or more (8.3% contained 30 students or more).
- for grades 4-8, nearly 39% of classes contained 25 students or more (6.5% contained 30 or more).
- for grades 9 and over, 40.3% of classes contained 25 students or more (13.5% – over 1 in 7 classrooms – contained 30 or more students).

While the numbers were smaller at the primary level as expected (due in part to class size reduction initiatives in some jurisdictions), there were still significant numbers of classes exceeding 25 students:

- for grades 1-3, just over 14% of classes contained 25 students or more
- for JK-K, nearly 12% of classes contained 25 students or more [see Chart 1]

We also surveyed teachers on their class composition, specifically:

- students with identified exceptionalities (defined as those students formally identified as having behavioural problems or mental or physical disabilities, as well as other special needs students including gifted students) and;
- English Language Learners and French Language Learners (defined as students whose first language differs from the school's primary language of instruction, and who may require focused educational supports to assist them in attaining proficiency in that language).

The average number of students with identified exceptionalities per class was 3.5, ranging from 3.8 students for grades 4-8 to 1.9 students for junior kindergarten/kindergarten [see Chart 2].

Students with identified exceptionalities accounted for 16.3% of total students in the surveyed classrooms, ranging from respective shares of 17.1% for grades 4-8 to 10% of students for junior kindergarten/kindergarten. As with class size, average numbers only tell part of the story. Of classes surveyed, over 81% have at least one student with formally identified exceptionalities, and 27.7% contain 5 or more students with identified exceptionalities.

In grades 4 and over, not only were class sizes generally larger but almost 1 in 3 (30.6%) classes contained 5 or more students with identified exceptionalities [see Chart 3].

In addition, the average number of English Language Learners and French Language Learners (ELL/FLL students) per class was 2.6. The prevalence was higher the lower the grade, ranging from 4.7 students for junior kindergarten/kindergarten to 1.7 students for grades 9 and over [see Chart 4].

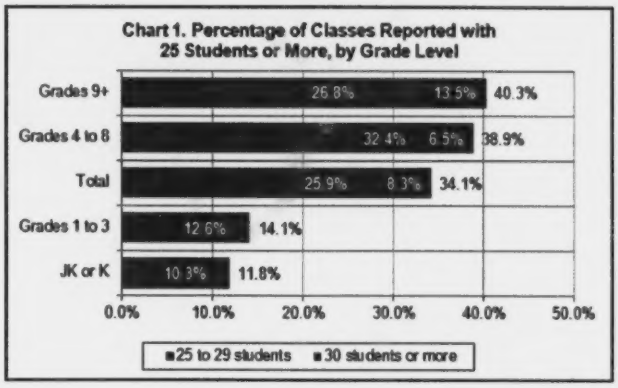
ELL/FLL students accounted for an average 12.2% of total students in the classroom, ranging from respective shares of 24.7% for junior kindergarten/kindergarten to 8.2% for grades 9 and over.

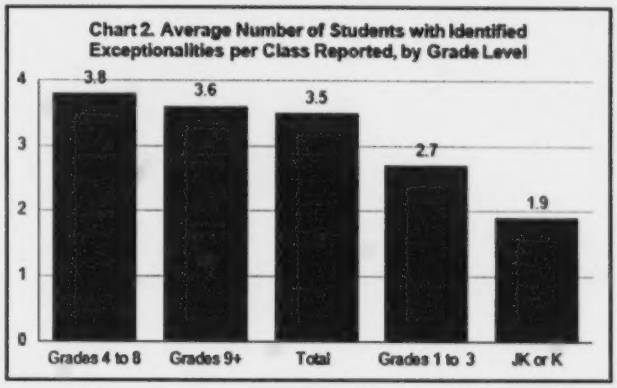
Lessons Learned

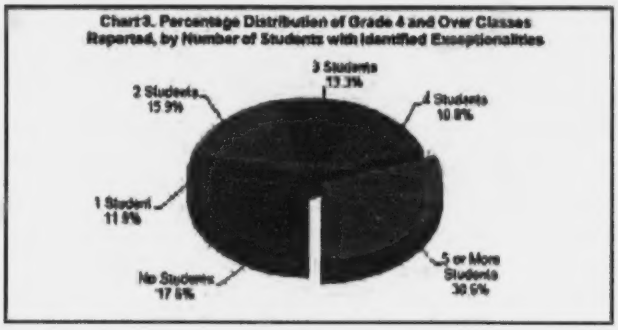
We can begin to draw some important lessons from this survey.

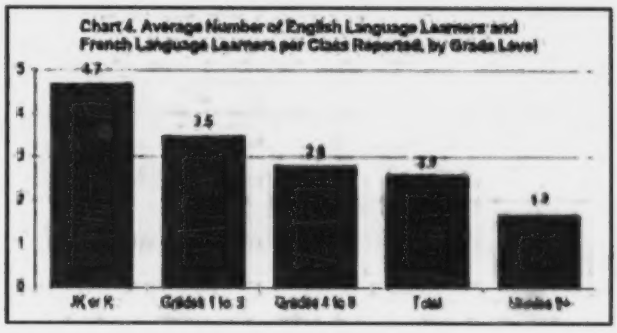
- Class size matters, but so does class composition – in other words, when we talk about class size, we also need to be thinking about the degree of student diversity in those classes. In order to enhance quality and equity in our public schools, they need to be addressed together.
- Student diversity in the contemporary Canadian school setting encompasses many different types of students with diverse and complex needs and learning styles. Our survey looked at students formally identified as having behavioural problems, mental or physical disabilities, as well as gifted students, and ELL/FLL students – however it did not include students with learning exceptionalities waiting to be identified, nor did it include students with other important educational needs, for example students from low-income families (and the poverty-related issues of hunger, illness, instability), students with mental health problems, or immigrant and refugee students.
- Data on average class size can only tell a small part of the story. The degree of student diversity as a proportion of the total class size needs to be taken into consideration. While it was beyond the scope of our present study, another important factor to consider is how well teachers are prepared and supported to effectively provide for the diversity of student needs – for example in terms of the provision of special education and ELL/FLL teachers and programs, school counselors, and ongoing professional development.

Bernie Froese-Germain and Richard Riel are Researchers at the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF). Bob McGahey is CTF's Acting Director of Research and Information.









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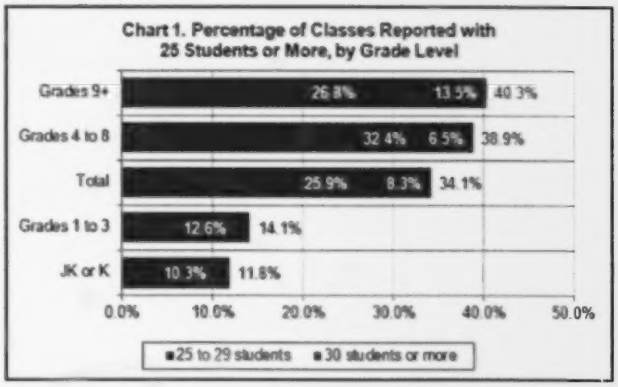

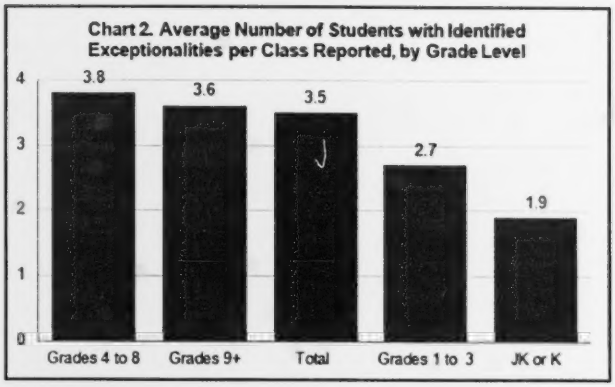

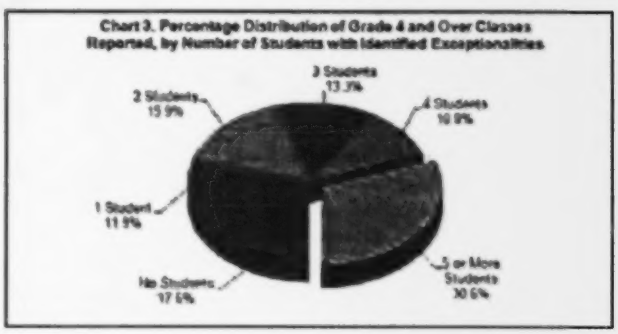

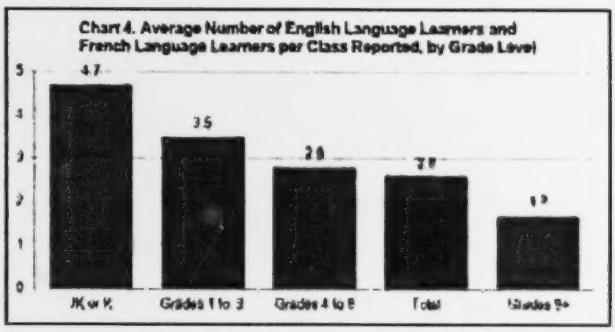

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Changing the World, Online and Off

How Teachers Connect Students to the Digital World

by MATTHEW JOHNSON

The classic 1985 science fiction novel *Ender's Game* is one of several books of that period that foresaw both the advent of the Internet and its eventual importance in society. While certain aspects of its portrayal seem dated – in particular, it more resembles the text-based bulletin board systems of the time than today's graphic Web – one element stands out as being particularly prescient: the use of the Internet to allow youth to participate fully in society. While today's young people aren't using the Internet to take over the world, as the characters in the novel do, they are increasingly using it to *change* the world, and more and more teachers are using the Internet to bring civic engagement into the classroom.

"What's truly unique about the Internet...is not that it is a channel for letting content *into* the classroom but that it allows students to have an impact *outside* the classroom."

Learning about civic issues online

One of the easiest ways teachers can use the Internet to help get students engaged is to let them learn about civic issues that are current and relevant to students. For example, Michele Cooper's math class at Holy Cross Catholic Elementary School in LaSalle, Ontario, is using the Web to collect data about topics such as education, literacy, hunger and income equity, in order to raise their awareness about social justice issues. These students are learning how to evaluate and present information about political issues, but just as importantly they're learning how to find facts and opinions that may not match their own.

A study on Youth and Participatory Politics by the MacArthur Foundation found that although many young people encountered a wide variety of opinions and perspectives on political and civic issues, a third said they had not been exposed to any political opinions at all. Two key factors that determined whether youth would encounter political opinions online were whether they were engaged in online communities – related to politics or not – and whether they had been taught digital literacy skills. Teaching young people how to find and evaluate a wide range of views is essential to producing engaged and well-informed adults.

Connecting with experts and activists

There's also a more direct way in which teachers and youth can be exposed to different views and perspectives: by using the Internet to connect with experts and activists. Tina Bergman's Grade 7/8 class at Breadner Elementary School in Trenton, Ontario, has drawn on a variety of experts to shed light on different issues relating to their course work, such as consulting with Dr. Gerald Conaty, the Director of Indigenous Studies at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, to learn more about the federal government's relationship with First Nations throughout Canada's history and by taking a digital fieldtrip to the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology in Drumheller, Alberta, to learn more about environmental issues relating to water use.

Learning about citizenship through games

Another way that teachers are using new media to make civic engagement relevant to their students is through games and virtual worlds. Video and computer games are a classic example of "starting where the learner is," because most young people – both boys and girls – play some kind of computer game on a regular basis. As well, the interactive quality of

games helps to make the content more relevant and immediate, and encourages civic participation by letting students feel as though they are making a difference. Some classrooms use games that are specifically designed to address civic and political issues, such as *iCivics*, a suite of games revolving around civic engagement issues that were co-designed by former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. (Most of these relate to specifically American issues, but the sub-game *Activate*, www.icivics.org/games/activate, deals more broadly with ways to promote change in social justice issues.) Another game that was created with political issues in mind is *Path of the Elders*, www.pathoftheelders.com, which introduces players to the culture and history of the Mushkegowuk and Anishinaabe First Nations and simulates the negotiation of the James Bay Treaty. Another option is Alternate Reality Games, which use custom-made web sites, blogs and videos to simulate possible events. Some of these, such as *World Without Oil*, www.worldwithoutoil.org/, deal with political issues and are appropriate for classroom use (like *iCivics* and *Path of the Elders*, *World Without Oil* comes with a lesson plan package to help teachers bring it into the classroom.)

Teachers aren't limited to games that were specifically designed to teach civic engagement, though. Many have used commercially-available games such as the *SimCity* and *Civilization* series, in either off-the-shelf or customized versions: Jen Dyenberg, a Canadian teacher currently living in Scotland, has used *SimCity 3000* to make the "nuts and bolts" of municipal government more engaging to students and to help them understand the different pressures that shape the development of a city.

Taking action online

What's truly unique about the Internet, though, is not that it is a channel for letting content *into* the classroom but that it allows students to have an impact *outside* the classroom. Teachers have two different opportunities to get their students involved on the Internet: by helping them to make a difference in an online community and to use the Internet to make a difference in their own communities.

Stephen Van Zoost, a teacher at Avon View High School in Annapolis, Nova Scotia, gave his students an opportunity to make a difference both online *and* in their community by expanding and improving the *Wikipedia* articles on two nearby towns, Stanley and Three Mile Plains. Brenna Gray, an instructor at Douglas College in New Westminster, British Columbia, did a similar project and found that students were more concerned about the quality and accuracy of their work when they knew it would be published online.

Because it has such low barriers to participation, *Wikipedia* can be a great introduction to the idea that young people can be active participants in online communities. The Internet can also be a vehicle to help spread awareness of what youth are doing offline: the Canadian Teachers' Federation's *Imagineaction* web site (www.imagine-action.ca) showcases a wide variety of civic engagement projects across Canada, from community gardens to promoting social action through studying Canadian authors.

It may seem like a long way from expanding a *Wikipedia* article to the kind of civic engagement seen in the "Arab Spring" (where social networking tools such as *Facebook* and *Twitter* were used to help organize for mass social change) or projects such as *Ushahidi* (www.ushahidi.com), which has been used for initiatives such as tracking violence following the elections in Kenya and organizing relief efforts in Haiti. In fact, though, young people in Canada are using the Internet to get involved in real social change, advocating on issues such as copyright and graduated driver's licenses (both areas where *Facebook* campaigns were credited with successfully influencing public policy). Teachers, too, are beginning to use the Internet to make civics education more relevant and engaging for students and to draw stronger connections between their course content and real-world civic engagement. The Internet allows youth to participate as full citizens in online communities and to make their voices heard in offline ones: it's time that we took advantage of that to bring authentic civic engagement into the classroom.

For more information on how digital media can be used to make youth more active citizens, read Media Awareness Network's report *From Consumer to Citizen: Digital Media and Youth Civic Engagement* (www.media-awareness.ca/english/corporate/media_kit/reports-publications.cfm#civic)

Matthew Johnson is Director of Education with the Media Awareness Network.

NLEE WORKSHOP 2012: HOPE AND THE ENVIRONMENT
March 29-31, 2012
Pinetree Lodge & Cabins, Traytown. Keynote: Dr. Elin Kelsey. Registration fee: $105 (due March 7) plus accommodations. For more information contact: Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Educators, nlee.workshop@gmail.com; Tel: Alannah Hunt at 709-637-7300, ext. 5.

NL ENVIROTHON 2012
April 26-28, 2012
Lion Max Simms Memorial Camp, Bishop's Falls, NL. Envirothon is a fast-paced, competitive, challenging event for high school students that promotes teamwork, public speaking and an understanding of Newfoundland & Labrador's natural resources. For more information contact Peter Davison, Model Forest of Newfoundland & Labrador, pdavison@mfnl.ca, www.mfnl.ca/envirothon, Tel: (709) 637-7300, Ext. 3; Fax: (709) 634-0255.

WOMEN IN SPORT CONFERENCE
May 4-5, 2012
St. John's. The conference will provide education and professional development for educators, students, and professionals interested in the subjects of physical activity, recreation and sport that target females. The event is expected to draw approximately 100 attendees with the purpose of encouraging, supporting, motivating females to participate in active programs. For more information contact: Trisha Keough-Boyer, Program Director at tboyer@sportnl.ca,Tel: 709-729-3684.

PRIMARY/ELEMENTARY SIC CONFERENCE
May 9-10, 2012
Theme: *Learning Together – Dare to Differentiate!* Details to follow.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' CONFERENCE
May 16-18, 2012
Capital Hotel, St. John's. For information please go to www.sac2012.ca.

COSS WORKSHOP: ATTENTION DIFFERENCE DISORDER: HELPING KIDS AND TEENS WITH ADD/ADHD FROM A STRENGTH BASED PERSPECTIVE
May 18, 2012
Holiday Inn, St. John's. Speaker: Dr. Kenny Handelman, MD – child, adolescent and adult psychiatrist specializing in assessing and treating ADHD. For information contact Keith Adey, keithadey@nf.sympatico.ca, Tel: 709-489-6481; Fax: 709-489-5001.

HUNTSMAN MARINE SCIENCE CENTRE ALL THINGS MARINE
July 16-20, 2012
St. Andrews, NB. A cross-curricula maritime institute with connections between biology, art, history, culture, and cooking. Explore the unique environment of the Bay of Fundy and the diversity of life it supports. Open to teachers and friends. Cost: $670 (early bird fee of $610 if you register by May 16). For more information visit www.huntsmanmarine.ca; Tel: 506-529-1220 or email tdean@huntsmanmarine.ca.

COSS WORKSHOP: PEER-MEDIATED SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: USING PEERS TO ENHANCE THE SOCIAL SKILLS OF ALL STUDENTS
September 21, 2012
Mount Peyton Hotel, Grand Falls-Windsor. Featuring Dr. Kimberly Maich and Dr. Carmen Hall. Sponsored by the Council of Special Services. More information is available on the NLTA website at www.nlta.nl.ca. Click on "Professional Development Opportunities".

COSS WORKSHOP: DYSLEXIA, SYMPTOMS AND SOLUTIONS
September 22, 2012
Mount Peyton Hotel, Grand Falls-Windsor. Presented by Susan Barton (author of the Barton Reading and Spelling System). Registration form available on the NLTA website at www.nlta.nl.ca. Click on "Professional Development Opportunities". For information contact Keith Adey, keithadey@nf.sympatico.ca, Tel: 709-489-6481; Fax: 709-489-5001.

Dates to Remember

March 2012

Mar 4-10 Education Week
Mar 15 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications
Mar 22 Provincial Executive Meeting
Mar 22-23 Pre-Retirement Seminar, Corner Brook
Mar 23-24 Joint Council Meeting
Mar 31 **Board Deadline:** Notice for retirement at end of school year
Mar 31 **Deadline:** Centennial Study Award Applications
Mar 31 **Deadline (on or before March 31):** International Conference Presenters Program Applications

April 2012

Apr 1 **Deadline:** Johnson Bursary Applications
Apr 15 **Deadline:** Notice of postponement of Deferred Salary Leave or withdrawal from DSLP
Apr 19 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications
Apr 30 **Deadline:** Deferred Salary Leave Applications
Apr 30 **Deadline:** Year-end resignation from contract

May 2012

May 7-11 Branch Election Weeks
May 7 **Deadline:** Notification by Board of Layoff
May 17 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications
May 25-26 Provincial Executive Meeting

June 2011

June 15 **Deadline:** Notification by board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests
June 16 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications

July 2011

July 31 **Deadline:** NLTA Scholarship Applications

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HUNTSMAN MARINE SCIENCE CENTRE ALL THINGS MARINE
July 16-20, 2012
St. Andrews, NB. A cross-curricula maritime institute with connections between biology, art, history, culture, and cooking. Explore the unique environment of the Bay of Fundy and the diversity of life it supports. Open to teachers and friends. Cost: $670 (early bird fee of $610 if you register by May 16). For more information visit www.huntsmanmarine.ca; Tel: 506-529-1220 or email tdean@huntsmanmarine.ca.

COSS WORKSHOP: PEER-MEDIATED SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: USING PEERS TO ENHANCE THE SOCIAL SKILLS OF ALL STUDENTS
September 21, 2012
Mount Peyton Hotel, Grand Falls-Windsor. Featuring Dr. Kimberly Maich and Dr. Carmen Hall. Sponsored by the Council of Special Services. More information is available on the NLTA website at www.nlta.nl.ca. Click on "Professional Development Opportunities".

COSS WORKSHOP: DYSLEXIA, SYMPTOMS AND SOLUTIONS
September 22, 2012
Mount Peyton Hotel, Grand Falls-Windsor. Presented by Susan Barton (author of the Barton Reading and Spelling System). Registration form available on the NLTA website at www.nlta.nl.ca. Click on "Professional Development Opportunities". For information contact Keith Adey, keithadey@nf.sympatico.ca, Tel: 709-489-6481; Fax: 709-489-5001.

Dates to Remember

March 2012

Mar 4-10	Education Week
Mar 15	**Deadline:** PD Fund applications
Mar 22	Provincial Executive Meeting
Mar 22-23	Pre-Retirement Seminar, Corner Brook
Mar 23-24	Joint Council Meeting
Mar 31	**Board Deadline:** Notice for retirement at end of school year
Mar 31	**Deadline:** Centennial Study Award Applications
Mar 31	**Deadline (on or before March 31):** International Conference Presenters Program Applications

April 2012

Apr 1	**Deadline:** Johnson Bursary Applications
Apr 15	**Deadline:** Notice of postponement of Deferred Salary Leave or withdrawal from DSLP
Apr 19	**Deadline:** PD Fund applications
Apr 30	**Deadline:** Deferred Salary Leave Applications
Apr 30	**Deadline:** Year-end resignation from contract

May 2012

May 7-11	Branch Election Week
May 7	**Deadline:** Notification by Board of layoff
May 17	**Deadline:** PD Fund applications
May 25-26	Provincial Executive Meeting

June 2011

June 15	**Deadline:** Notification by board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests
June 16	**Deadline:** PD Fund applications

July 2011

July 31	**Deadline:** NLTA Scholarship Applications